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## PRIME MINISTER

TRANSCRIPT OF DOORSTOP, CANBERRA RACECOURSE, 7 MAY 1989

E & O E - PROOF ONLY

JOURNALIST: Prime Minister would you encourage moves by the Labor Party to not run a candidate against Mr Macphee if he ran as an independent?

PM: It's purely hypothetical. Mr Macphee is yet to make a statement about what he's going to do. I don't see any benefit for me or Mr Macphee in speculating about what will happen. The only certain thing is of course that the Liberal Party has demonstrated conclusively its lurch to the extreme right. Now how that develops to Mr Macphee's advantage or ours is a matter that will be worked out in the future.

JOURNALIST: What should he do then, Sir?

PM: It's not a matter for me to tell Mr Macphee what to do. I wouldn't presume to tell Mr Macphee what he should do. That's his business.

JOURNALIST: Will this whole incident rebound on Mr Howard?

PM: Yes. It already has.

JOURNALIST: Do you think this will be the turning point as to whether they'll win or lose the election?

PM: That point was passed a long time ago. They were never going to win it.

JOURNALIST: Mr Hawke what about the possibility of an ACT Liberal/Labor coalition?

PM: Well it conjures up some remarkable pictures doesn't it. I really haven't been involved in that.

JOURNALIST: Would you support it?

PM: Again, if the Party here were to work out that that's the only way in which there could be a sensible governing position arrived at, well then I guess we could live with that.

JOURNALIST: Is it important for the ACT Labor Party -

PM: Let me say that if it happens here there is no chance of it happening anywhere else at a state or a federal level.

JOURNALIST: Well if it did happen would it be embarrassing to the federal sphere?

PM: No it wouldn't be embarrassing to me. I think the embarrassment would perhaps be for the Liberal Party to some extent. But I mean they have now got a system here which has sown up some very strange results and some people might regard this as sort of a crowning of achievement in an episode of rather bizarre developments.

JOURNALIST: What about the fact that your Labor Party's been talking with the No Self Government Party with a possibility of a coalition.

PM: I've run out of interest in this subject my friend.

JOURNALIST: Mr Hawke do you think now that people who are against Mr Howard might see it as a good time to challenge him for the leadership at all?

PM: There's been a serious undercurrent against Mr Howard now for over a year, very intense and the only reason he's there is that they can't discover anyone who they think's got any qualities of leadership to replace him. But I think the councils of desperation may be accelerating a bit now.

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